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(CIA)

WASHINGTON--SEN. WAYNE MORSE, D-ORE., CALLED TODAY FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE CIA'S NEW DIRECTOR, RICHARD HELMS, FOR LAUDING A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL ATTACKING SEN. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT, D-ARK.

MORSE, A MEMBER OF FULBRIGHT'S SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, ISSUED A STATEMENT AS THE APOLOGETIC HELMS -- ALREADY HAVING TELEPHONED REGRETS TO FULBRIGHT -- CAME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE, PROBABLY TO MAKE A PERSONAL APOLOGY WHILE REPORTING ON CIA ACTIVITY.

THE 53-YEAR-OLD HELMS, PROMOTED TO CIA CHIEF ONLY A MONTH AGO, WAS THE TARGET OF SENATE OUTRAGE YESTERDAY FOR A LETTER HE WROTE TO THE ST. LOUIS GLOBE-DEMOCRAT ENDORSING AN EDITORIAL WHICH CRITICIZED FULBRIGHT AS "CRAFTY."

MORSE SAID HELMS "CAN BEST SERVE HIS COUNTRY TODAY BY RESIGNING HIS POSITION."

"UNTIL HE DOES, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE CANNOT REST SECURE IN THE BELIEF THAT THE AGENCY IS LIVING UP TO ITS LEGAL MANDATE NOT TO OPERATE WITHIN THE UNITED STATES OR INFLUENCE OR PARTICIPATE IN AFFAIRS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES, THE OREGON SENATOR SAID.

NEITHER FULBRIGHT NOR SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER MIKE MANSFIELD, A COMMITTEE MEMBER, WOULD GO ALONG WITH MORSE'S DEMAND, HOWEVER. FULBRIGHT CALLED IT PREMATURE.

"HE (HELMS) MADE A MISTAKE, ADMITTED IT AND HAS FACED UP TO IT," MANSFIELD SAID. "I THINK IT WILL BE A GOOD LESSON. HE CAME IN WITH THE BEST QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE JOB AND OUGHT TO BE GIVEN A CHANCE.

"WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES. IF WE HAD TO RESIGN WHEN WE MAKE MISTAKES THE WHOLE SENATE WOULD HAVE TO RESIGN."

MORSE INSISTED THAT THE PUBLIC BE MADE "AWARE THAT THE CIA IS UNDERTAKING INCREASING ACTIVITY WITHIN AMERICAN EDUCATION AND THE INFLUENCING OF OPINION THROUGH PLANTED PRESS STORIES AND ARTICLES."

HE SAID IT MUST BE ASSUMED FROM HELMS' LETTER THAT IT WAS "ONLY A SMALL SEGMENT OF WHAT IS GOING ON THAT IS UNSIGNED OR UNREVEALED AS TO ITS CIA SOURCE."

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HELMS GAVE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TODAY A "FORTHRIGHT APOLOGY" FOR HAVING SIGNED A LETTER CRITICAL OF ITS CHAIRMAN.

FULBRIGHT SAID THE CLOSED-DOOR EXCHANGE OPENED UP A DISCUSSION OF ESPIONAGE AREAS HIS COMMITTEE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN ABLE TO REACH WITH CIA OFFICIALS.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILLING TO COMMENT REJECTED MORSE'S SUGGESTION THAT THE 53-YEAR-OLD HELMS--IN HIS JOB ONLY A MONTH--SHOULD RESIGN BECAUSE OF HIS LETTER-WRITING INDISCRETION.

MORSE'S STATEMENT WAS READ IN THE CLOSED-DOOR MEETING IN THE ABSENCE OF THE OREGON SENATOR.

HELMS TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE SESSION:

"I REGRET SIGNING THE LETTER. IT WAS A MISTAKE. I REALIZE IT WAS A MISTAKE. I REGRET IT AND HAVE APOLOGIZED."

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